Notes and Observations

TRACHEA ATRIPLICIS LINNAEUS, THE ORACHE MOTH, IN KENT.– On the evening of 8th August 1986, I went to Dungeness with the prime objective of looking for specimens of *Thalera fimbrialis* Scop. When I set up my lights, I did so on my own there being no other entomologists on the shingle that night. Probably just as well, as I have found that most good things seem to head for other entomologists' trap if there is a choice. It was a mild evening with light variable winds, following a period of mainly south-westerly winds.

The early part of the evening was spent splashing about around the edge of a pond watching both male and female *Acentria ephemerella* D. & S., (*nivea* Ol.) hurtling about over the surface. I could find no trace of the rudimentary winged female form in the weed or litter round the pond, but the winged forms of both sexes were very common. Back at the light, probable migrant moths were not common, and I recorded five *Autographa gamma* L., and three *Agrotis ipsilon* Hufn. Throughout the evening I noted sixty-six species of macrolepidoptera, and at 1.45 am, with very little moth movement, decided to pack up my lights.

I was therefore startled to find a female *Trachea atriplicis* Linn., the orache moth, sitting in a trap. I was aware of specimens taken on the Essex coast the previous month, but was not expecting this particular green moth in Kent, so much later. The specimen was carefully boxed and kept in the hope of eggs. In view of the manner in which it battered itself to pieces over the next few days, I might as well have used thumb and forefinger, but it did lay about one hundred and twenty eggs, none of which proved fertile. I kept my lights running on until dawn but without any further excitement.

This appears to be the first record of the orache moth for Kent. It would be interesting now to know if the continental populations of this moth have undergone any unusual expansions of range or size, to lead to records in England after such a long absence. Perhaps our continental friends could comment on any such changes. DAVID WILSON, Joyce House, Green Tye, Much Hadham, Herts.

THE FAUNA OF SAND DUNES AT ALVOR (PORTUGAL) AND LANZAROTE (CANARY ISLES) – Although marine sand dunes appear to present a remarkably similar and consistent environment throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, their arthropod fauna differs widely between one place and another. For instance, the false-scorpion *Dactylochelifer latreillei* Leach is found throughout Britain, as is the salticid spider *Marpissa* (= *Hyctia*) *nivoyi* (Lucas) (Cloudsley-Thompson, J. L., 1959, *Entomologist's Mon. Mag.* **95**: 24); but *M. nivoyi* does not appear to occur in the Bay of Biscay where *D. latreillei* is also common (Cloudsley-Thompson, J. L., 1960, *Entomologist's Mon. Mag.*, **96**: 49-53), while I found neither

species among the dunes at Pamuok in south-western Turkey (1945, *Entomologist's Mon. Mag.*, **108**: 165).

In September 1984, and August 1985, I visited the dunes at Alvor, West of Portimão in southern Portugal and, in September 1985, dunes on both the north, north-east, and the south coasts of Lanzarote, Canary Isles. In none of these did I find either *D. latreillei* or *M. nivoyi.*

The dunes at Alvor appeared to me to be more sparsely populated than those at Pamuok, but I found a number of grasshoppers there as well as sphecid and mutillid wasps, a few scarabeid beetles and three species of Tenebrionidae which Dr. R. A. Crowson kindly identified for me as follows: *Blaps* sp., *Tentyria* sp. (most common) and a species of *Zophosis* and of *Isocerus* (or perhaps *Dendarus).* During the day they buried themselves on the shaded sides of the tufts of marram grass, whence they emerged at about 17.30h and could be collected as they walked on the surface on the dunes. Here they left numerous conspicuous tracks, especially the *Blaps* and *Tentyria* sp. I also obtained a nymph of the masked assassin bug *Reduvius personatus* (L.), for naming which my thanks are due to Ray Aldridge. It was camouflaged by particles of sand adhering to a viscid substance on its cuticle. This is by no means a new observation: indeed the phenomenon is illustrated by S. W. Frost (1942, *General Entomology,* New York. Fig. 384), but it was new to me. T. R. Odhiambo (1958, *Entomologist's Mon. Mag.*, **94**: 47) recorded similar camouflaging habits in nymphal stages of the reduviid *Acanthaspis petax* Stal. in Uganda. The only spiders I found were yellow juveniles of a species of Araneidae, and juveniles of two lycosid species, one of which was sand-coloured and extremely cryptic.

The dunes at La Calete on the north end of Lanzarote were almost sterile, but I found an immature *Theridion* sp. among the clumps of *Sueda.* At Arrieta, on the north east, and at Papaguayo on the south – where the dominant was a leafless composite shrub, *Zollikoferia spinosa* (kindly identified by Richard Bailey) – I could not find any spiders or insects other than a fly or two. The temperature and relative humidity on the surface of the sand was 37°C, 38% RH at 13.00h (La Calete, 16 September) 31°C, 60% RH at 17.00h (Papaguayo, 15 September) and 25°C, 65% RH at 23.00h (Puerto del Carmen, 15 September) – measured with a Kane – May electronic thermohygrometer (KM8000). These very moderate readings reflect the equable climate of the Canary Isles: the sparseness of the flora and fauna of Lanzarote is undoubtedly due to the infrequency of rain. – J. L. CLOUDSLEY-THOMPSON, Department of Biology, Birkbeck College (University of London), Malet Street, London WC1 7HX.